

M A K I N G
M A R G I N

**GOD'S SECRETS TO ABUNDANT TIME,
RESOURCES, & CONNECTION IN A BUSY WORLD**

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Margin by David Reyes

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— Introduction —

“Enough.” It’s a word that seems so passive and unsatisfying. “Enough” means meeting the bare minimum. It’s a word that surrenders true fulfillment and replaces it with simply surviving. Did you know that God intends for you to live not just with “enough to get by,” but with abundance and surplus in your life?

Philippians 4:19 ESV says, “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Take note that this verse is not saying that God will supply for our needs according to *our level of need*, it is saying He will supply for our need according to *His riches*. His riches so far surpass even our greatest need that it’s beyond comprehension. He gives abundantly more than the bare minimum.

I’ve lived a life of “enough.” I’ve lived with barely enough to make it, and I’ve had late nights lying in bed awake, crippled with anxiety as I stared at the ceiling with the realization that our family had nothing left. But I hit a turning point when Jesus began to unveil His actual nature and plan for my life and our family. It’s a plan He intends for all His kids, but frequently we miss it because we’re so determined to fix things on our own that we spend everything we have in pursuit of an answer only He can provide.

You’re about to take some incredible steps toward creating ownership over your life and adding extra time, space, and energy that you can use to do what you were designed to do without burning yourself out.

I pray this book is a turning point for you. As you read and pray, know that this is more than just nice ideas on a page, but an opportunity for life transformation that can help you enter into the abundance that God has always wanted for you. After all, our God has never been a God of just “enough,” but He’s the God who says, “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over...” (Luke 6:38).

— Chapter 1 —

MARGIN

So above all, constantly seek God's kingdom and his righteousness, then all these less important things will be given to you abundantly.

Matthew 6:33, TPT

I've heard many people say, "I just don't have enough margin for..." and though the end of the sentence usually varies, it's typically expressing a lack of something important. It could be about being too busy for time with family or friends. Or it could refer to not having enough time to develop spiritually or to grow leadership skills or run a successful business. Whatever the case, we live in a culture that is short on time, energy, and even the capacity to do all the normal things life requires of us.

Without extra space in their lives, I often see people responding to everything from a place of exhaustion. Small tasks seem burdensome, and the everyday wear of life seems to take a much bigger toll. When this happens, important aspects of life can begin to suffer and lose ground. Everything becomes focused on the list of needs, and there's no space left for dreaming, strategizing, or even just having fun.

The casualties from this burnout mode usually start at home. Marriages suffer the first strains, and when children are in the picture, they aren't far behind. The reality is, those who live with no extra space in their lives are going to see it eventually impact every area, even those they tend to put highest on the list of priorities.

This is directly connected to a foundational question we all have to face regarding the demands put on us by life, family, the workplace, and beyond. The question is, *"Where does it stop?"* At what point have we completed everything on the list? When do we reach the time where we no longer have demands on us, and the rest is just freedom? Those who are honest with themselves recognize the rhetorical nature of the question. It doesn't stop. Our work will always have new challenges and demands. Marriages will always need romance, time, and intentionality. Children will always need attention, encouragement, and connection.

Knowing that the list will always have new things added to it puts us in a sink or swim scenario. The list isn't going anywhere. We can either learn to live with it and find a way to conquer and thrive in its ongoing demands, or we can allow it to overwhelm and overload us.

One of the most destructive scenarios I've seen is with those who think they've conquered the list. They feel great about what they're accomplishing, but they don't realize they're constantly running on empty,

and pain, disconnection, and disaster are lurking nearby in the areas they've neglected. The things they've treated as less important slowly become the very things that will undermine the success they believe they have.

Miriam-Webster defines "margin" as "a spare amount or measure or degree allowed or given for contingencies or special situations."¹ Another definition says it is "a limit in a condition or process beyond which or below which something is no longer possible or acceptable." To simplify these, when you have margin, you've got *extra* in the tank, and when you don't have enough margin, you reach a point where it's not possible to go any further.

Another way of looking at margin is that it's the space between boundaries. In the first Star Wars movie, there's a scene where Luke Skywalker and his friends are trapped in a large trash compactor. If the smell and the inability to escape weren't enough, the walls slowly begin to close in on them and they try to find anything they can to pry between the walls to hold them at bay. Needless to say, if margin is the space between two boundaries, Luke and the others are about to have a really bad day if they run out of it!

Sometimes we similarly feel the walls closing in on us. It seems like our lives are oriented around finding things to take our time and energy, whether it's legitimate work, or just filling every spare moment with social media or other forms of expensive time-wasting. All of a sudden, we feel ourselves running out of space and we realize our own emptiness. Our physical and emotional energy are gone—the accounts are drained, and the debt keeps piling up.

Several years ago, God opened my eyes to a new way of looking at this. He showed me He had actually provided the solution to this in His word. It's found in Leviticus and demonstrated in the book of Ruth.

Now when you reap the harvest of your land, *you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest.* Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God.

—Leviticus 19:9-10, emphasis added

DON'T HARVEST THE WHOLE FIELD

When you grasp the fullness of the principle that God is revealing here, it can be revolutionary. The first major idea is that you're not supposed to harvest the whole field of your life. He's given you time, how much of it are you going to reap? He's given you energy. Where will you choose to spend it? Too often we harvest everything in our lives to the very edges—all of our energy and all of our resources—so we have nothing left. Then we try to find creative solutions to find time for ourselves, our relationship with God, connection with our spouse, etc. The thing is, you're not supposed to have margin for your family. Your family is supposed to be among the first that receive from the harvest in your life.

The Lord says to leave the corners, the margin, the extra for the poor and the stranger. The "stranger" the verse refers to are foreigners—people who aren't part of the country of Israel. For us, the closest comparison to the stranger would be the lost—those who haven't yet joined the family of Jesus.

The verse also says that we're not to gather any gleanings from the harvest. Gleaning is what falls to the ground during the process of harvesting. So not only are we to leave the corners behind, but we're also told to not even bend over to pick up what we dropped. We have a clear directive here from the Lord to

keep extra margin in our lives, and He even specifies that this isn't margin for vacation or reading that next book. It's specifically for the lost and needy.

One interesting note is that He doesn't say exactly how much of the corners to leave. There's not a specific command of "15 feet from the edges" or anything like that. He leaves it open for people to determine their own level of generosity and how much margin they will have left, but it's clear that the corners are not to be touched.

This command led to the meeting of Ruth and Boaz (great grandparents of King David) in Ruth chapter 2. Ruth and her mother-in-law had come to Israel after the death of their husbands, and Boaz noticed Ruth as she gathered the grain that had fallen from the shearers in his field. The great grandmother of the future king of Israel survived and found a husband by going around the field and gathering the leftover wheat. She started from poverty, but she found abundance by what Boaz had left behind.

God instituted this because He knew it was going to be needed. We live in a society where many people have great needs, and the Lord has called His people to be the ones that have enough left over to supply them. Yes, God can and does move supernaturally in the Earth to bring increase and blessing, but He also moves through His people. We are the hands and feet of Jesus, and it was never intended for us to sit back to only focus on our own needs. My coaching clients know they'll see increase and blessing in their businesses and families as they learn how to minister and care for the people God entrusts to them. God is passionate about us being available and supplied to reach out to those around us who are in need.

Consistently throughout scripture, God has shown favor and increase for those who have given and cared for the poor and the lost. And some of the times of His greatest frustration with Israel are the times when they neglected or even abused these very same groups of people. As we take Him at His word and learn to be people who have capacity to give what's left over from our lives, we learn the incredible lesson that God can't be outgiven, and He values and rewards hearts that love and care for what He loves and cares for.

The practical application here is clear: we can't keep spending our lives like we'll never run out. We have a limited supply of time, energy, and capacity for building into ourselves and others. We need to leave leftovers *without a plan for their use*. This can be incredibly hard for some of us. When I'm working, I have a tendency to take note of other tasks and projects that need to be done. If I'm not careful, I can end up working on three things at the same time, with a very full list to continue once those are done. But God is asking us to release our need to get to everything. Instead, we need to prioritize our time and our lives, leaving energy and space unused so it can be called upon by those who need what we carry.

SPENT ON PURPOSE

I've met and worked with many people who have the best of intentions, but if you were to ask them where their time and energy have been spent, they wouldn't be able to give a full picture. We're pulled in so many directions, and we build up so many coping mechanisms to distract and soothe us, that it can be incredibly easy to go through a whole day and not know what we did with it.

A good analogy for this is how we handle finances. It's wisdom to have a budget, to set boundaries in spending, to grow savings, and to invest in things that bring a financial return. But without a strict budget, many people end up spending beyond their means. One five-dollar drive-thru burger doesn't break the bank. But a hundred similar small purchases add up quickly, and suddenly there's not enough for what's needed to get through the rest of the month.

With access to credit, this can get even worse as we spend beyond what's in our accounts, borrowing tomorrow's money to spend today as our monthly credit card payments go up, slowly increasing our monthly expenses along with them.

God is calling us to learn the art of intentional spending. When we follow the pattern He's laid out, we can take what He's given us and apply wisdom to invest in our time, our energy, and even our relational connections so they'll grow healthier in unison. Sometimes that requires us to invest in things we wouldn't ordinarily put first on our list.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it on His head as He reclined at the table. But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, "Why this waste? For this perfume might have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor." But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me. For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me. For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."

—Matthew 26:6-13

In this passage, Mary had a resource that was incredibly valuable. In the account of the same story in John 12, Judas even notes that it could have been sold for three hundred denarii, the equivalent today of nearly \$60,000. Judas sees this extravagant act as wasteful, thinking of all the other things that money could have been used for. But Jesus explains that not only is this act of worship appropriate, but it will have a return on investment that will echo throughout generations to come.

When we evaluate each day with the needs, demands, and desires that come with it, God offers us the opportunity to invest in what will bring extended impact on the Earth. We have the chance to stop building our own kingdoms and instead to partner with Him in building His.

In His kingdom, a year's wages as an act of worship is the best decision. In His kingdom, leaving work early to play with your kids, pausing on the urgent project to have lunch with your spouse, and keeping enough energy to stop and pray for the person that looked depressed in the grocery store might actually be part of the key to enduring impact and success.

COMMUNION

The verse in Leviticus mentions two specific things that are to be left for the poor and the stranger—grain and grapes. These are the core ingredients used to make bread and wine, the elements of Communion. In the old covenant, before the blood of Jesus had been poured out, before the body of Jesus had been broken, the Father desired to provide a way for the poor and foreigners to come into communion with Him and His people. The representation of His body and His blood—the invitation to the table of God—was meant to be open to all and made accessible by leaving behind the edges and whatever had fallen.

What would happen if you could do that with your life? If you could say, "There is leftover grain, there's leftover wine, there is enough in me because I'm a living, walking container of communion with Jesus." You get to invite people into connection with the holy spirit because you haven't spent it all—you haven't poured it all out yet. When your life is rightly ordered with margin to spare, you're not only partaking in communion with Jesus daily yourself, but you also leave the fragrance of intimacy with Jesus in your trail for others to gather and partake. The presence of God follows a life with margin left to give.

As you continue through this book, this chapter emphasizes the core value that God has given to create space in your life, so you are not continually overwhelmed and wrung dry. You make margin by not using it all up. It sounds simple enough, but anyone who has tried to build a life of abundance will have found many obstacles that make it anything but easy.

If this chapter is the “what,” in the following chapters you’ll learn the “how,” along with some principles of thinking and living that will give you the framework to make a life of margin not just obtainable, but sustainable.

Don't Miss the Rest of This Incredible Book!

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